

Deferring Studenthood: a study of Naga youth in Delhi

学生時代の延引：デリーにおけるナガー族の若者についての研究

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Abstract: This article is part of an on-going project on some young Naga people who are staying in Delhi and prolonging their studies without having a clear objective for their future. The Nagas are an ethnic minority in an area in Northeast India which borders Burma to the west. Because it is a less developed area and lacks industry, many young people go to big cities to continue their higher education and for work. Before the modernisation, Naga villages had dormitories called the *Morung* where young boys resided when they reached puberty until becoming an adult member of society. Girls also had a similar dormitory system. It was a system which trained young people to become adults. Implementing modern education affected the traditional training system. The article details the ethnography of young Nagas in Delhi and depicts their views on the education. It includes issues such as modernisation, globalisation and consumerism, which need to be discussed in the forthcoming paper.

Keywords: Naga, India, Tradition, Education, Coming of Age, Modernisation, Consumerism, Globalisation, Youth Culture

要約: 本稿はデリー在住のナガー族の若者が明確な目標もなく就学期間を延長している事象の研究途中経過の報告書である。ナガー族はミャンマーと国境を接する地域、インド北東部に住む少数民族である。その地域は経済的発展が進んでおらず、産業も多くないため、若者の多くは高等教育の就学のためや就職のため大都市に流出している。近代化以前にはナガー族の村には若者のための「モラン」と呼ばれる寮があり、思春期に達した少年は成人するまでそこで寝泊りをしていた。少女に対しても同様な施設が存在した。この制度は若者を一人前の大人へと成長させるための訓練機関であった。近代教育の導入によりこの訓練制度に対して影響を及ぼした。本稿はデリー在住のナガー族の若者のエスノグラフィーを描き、若者たちの教育に対する意見を書き記した。このテーマは近代化、グローバリゼーション、消費主義などの理論と関連するが、理論的な考察は以後の論文において行うことにする。

キーワード: ナガー族、インド、伝統、教育、成人、近代化、消費主義、グローバリゼーション、若者文化

The auto rickshaw passed Indra Vihar, which is where many students of Delhi University stay due to the close location to the North Campus. The rickshaw drove further down the road and passed a busy marketplace. The area is known as Batra because of a movie theatre. Since it was after 9 o'clock the place was not as busy as it is in the early hours, however there were still quite a few young people hanging around the cinema hall enjoying their night out with friends. There were still some eating

establishments open at this hour, however unlike commercial areas in South Delhi where you can find bars and restaurants serving alcoholic drinks, there are very few places which serve alcoholic drinks in North Delhi. People can purchase alcohol from the licenced liquor shops that are everywhere in Delhi, but drinking alcohol in restaurants and bars is not as common as it is in Western and East Asian countries. Drinking alcohol in bars and restaurants is considered to be a luxury for many people in India, and some people do not drink because of religious reasons, while others consider it to be a bad habit.

In Delhi, Connaught Place is roughly located in the centre, which divides the north and south. Generally speaking, rich people reside in South Delhi including ministers in central government, and posh shopping malls are also located in South Delhi and in an adjacent city called Gurgaon, which is situated in Haryana state. Compared to South Delhi, the average rents are reasonable in North Delhi, although some areas are quite expensive. In Batra a cinema ticket costs about 40 rupees and they mainly play Hindi films, while it costs more than 200 rupees in cinemas in South Delhi where many Hollywood blockbusters are shown.ⁱ In cinemas in South Delhi, English films are shown without dubbing or subtitles because they are targeting English speaking audiences, while Hollywood films shown in North Delhi are dubbed in Hindi because the majority of the audience feels more comfortable with Hindi.

The auto rickshaw passed a busy street in the Batra region and drove further down the road which was becoming quieter and quieter and even the street lights were becoming fewer. It was late December and the city was covered by fog. Because the cabin is not covered in auto rickshaws, the cold air comes in directly and it is very cold in winter. I was heading towards a place called Gandhi Vihar to visit a friend of mine, Ayang for a party.ⁱⁱ The rickshaw crossed a bridge where there were almost no street lights and the road was not paved. It went further along the bumpy, dusty road and finally reached a residential area. I got off the rickshaw, paid the driver 70 rupees and looked for my friend's house.

I found the house easily. Her flat was on the second floor, and I went up the narrow stairs and rang the doorbell. Ayang opened the door and asked me to come in. The party had already started, and ten to fifteen young men and women were drinking and chatting. The flat had three bedrooms and a sitting room. The people in the bedrooms were sitting on the mattresses and chatting with friends and in the sitting room music was playing loudly and some people were dancing to it. In North India Hindi songs are very popular and are quite often played at parties and weddings. However, not a single

Hindi song was played at the party that day. Instead English songs were being played; some of which were rock, while others were hip hop. This was simply because the people at the party do not usually listen to Hindi music. Most of the people at the party were from Nagaland and some were from other places in Northeast India. They were talking to each other in English.

I met Ayang at one of the events organised by people from Northeast India a few weeks ago and she invited me to the party which she had organised with her flatmates. Ayang is taking a BA degree correspondence course. She came to Delhi three years ago after spending a few years in Kohima, the capital of Nagaland where she had been working after graduating from high school. Many of the people at the party were students, some were studying at college, some were studying post graduate degrees and others were studying at a coaching school in order to prepare for their civil servant exams.

Ayang mentioned to me that she would be finishing her course soon, however she did not know what she was going to do after finishing her degree.

‘I don’t know what I am going to do after,’ she mentioned. ‘I am probably going to pursue further study. I might study political science or sociology.’

The author heard similar comments from quite a few young Nagas in Delhi. This article will investigate the tendency of young Naga people to opt for further study without having a clear vision of their future. Through investigating this phenomenon, the article aims to discuss the change in the concept of adulthood among Naga society as well as attempts to relate this to the broader picture of modernisation and change in lifestyle.

In the next section, the paper gives a brief introduction about Naga people followed by an exploration of their social system, the *Murang* to gain an understanding of the traditional system of becoming an adult in Naga society. The article then looks at the ethnography of current young people in Delhi to investigate their perception of adulthood now.

An Overview of Naga People and Society

Nagas reside in Northeast India. In India now, Northeast commonly refers to the seven states: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim. The area borders Burma to the east, Bangladesh to the south, Nepal to the west and Bhutan and China to the north. The Northeast is a hilly area and has lots

of rain. The ethnicities of people in Northeast is quite mixed, but the people of the eastern part of the area are mainly Mongoloid and look more like people from East Asia, Burma or Thailand.

Naga people mainly live in Nagaland but some of the sub tribes live in the neighbouring states such as Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, while others live in Burma. The total population of the Naga is estimated at about 4 million (Vashum 2005). In the state of Nagaland, as the name suggests, Nagas are the main ethnic group, which includes Ao, Angami, Sema, Konyak, Lotha, Chakhesang, Rengma, Chang, and so on (Kumar 2005). There are also non-Naga tribes such as Kuki and Kachari. Apart from the Naga people mentioned above, Tangkhul and Mao are large Naga groups that live outside Nagaland. The Nagas live predominantly in some of the districts in Manipur, for example in the Ukhrul district, where there are Thangkhuls, and in the Tamenglong district, where Zeliangrongs and Kharams are the major ethnic groups (Vashum 2005).

The languages spoken by the Nagas are very diverse. Nagamese which is a mixture of Assamese and Bengali is commonly spoken in Nagaland, but this language is not derived from the vernacular languages of the Nagas. Each sub-tribe has its own language, such as Angami, Ao, Chang, and so on, and my observations are that people speak their own dialect when they converse among themselves. Some tribes, such as Tangkhul, have their own tribal language like Tangkhul language, but they also have their own village languages. So, people from the same village speak their village language among themselves, but when people from different villages gather, they use Tangkhul to communicate. Apart from their own dialects, English is very widely used. Schooling is conducted in English, so people who have received formal education have a good command of English, which is very advantageous when they proceed to higher education. I had many opportunities to attend gatherings of the Naga people and the young people from different tribes were speaking English to each other.

The religion of the Nagas is predominantly Christianity. According to the 2001 census, 98.5 percent of the ST population is Christian.ⁱⁱⁱ According to Aier (2006), Christianity came into the region accompanied by the colonial interests through the British in order to soothe the aggressive tribal reaction. Before that the Nagas practiced their traditional religion, which could be categorised as animism (Singh 2008). Christianity came to the Naga people in the 19th century. Baptist Church is the dominant church among the Nagas. (Vashum 2005). Christianity has also contributed to the spreading of the English language.



Picture 1: Naga People (Poumai Tribe) in Traditional Clothes

Vashum (2005) argues that the societies of Nagas are basically classless and casteless but egalitarian in structure. Traditional laws ruled the code of conduct for the members. Now, modern laws cover the Naga societies, but traditional customary laws are still influential in everyday practices. According to Vashum (2005), the Nagas are well known for their honesty, loyalty and sincerity. From my experience of the Naga people, I also determined that they have quite high moral standards.

The Naga people used to have a head-hunting custom. According to Vashum (2005: 16), “‘Head-hunting’ usually takes place when anyone and/or a villager from outside its village state trespasses, hurts, harms, humiliates, and/or mistreats any of the citizens/villagers and whoever - an individual, a village or sometimes groups of villagers try to invade or act mischievously towards the village/er(s)’. It functioned to maintain the village societies. Head-hunting was also associated with bravery. Young men who could take the heads of his enemies were respected. As Kumar (2005) mentions, the head was the trophy of a successful warrior, and it entitled him to special honours. The religious rituals and economic prosperity were also associated with head-hunting. Enemy heads were offered to the gods of crops for a good yield and harvest. When human heads were not offered to the gods, it was believed that the gods

would harm the cultivator of the land.

Formation of the Naga identity: A Brief History of the Naga

Here, the article will briefly explore the construction of the Naga identity together with a brief account of its history. The Naga has an awkward relationship with the Indian government, and a significant number of people desire autonomy, some of whom opt for the establishment of a sovereign nation state. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the complicated issue of the Naga's political movement, however a brief introduction to the process of the construction of Naga consciousness is necessary to understand their view on the Indian government and on the people from North India, which comprises an important part of the identity of many Naga people.

The Nagas migrated from other places but there is no clear theory about this. One theory is that the Nagas came from the Yunnan province of China in prehistoric times (Vashum 2005). There is another probability that they came from the Southeast Islands and went Northwest to the Naga Hills. Singh (2008) also notes a possible theory on the migration of the Naga and mentions that the Nagas migrated to the present places from Central Asia, sometime in the B.C. era when other tribes like Caren, Shan, Chin and Koyans migrated from the same place (Central Asia) and that they settled where they found unoccupied lands.

The Nagas are tribal societies that consist of villages. Vashum (2005) argues that in tribes such as Ao, Lotha and Sangtan, a republican type of government was prevalent, while Konyak, Sema and Mao had kings who had considerable power. Regardless of the type of society, Naga villages were basically self-sufficient. According to Shimray (2001), there was no division of labour in Naga villages.

It is said that the first contact from an outsider for the Naga was the Ahom some time back in 1228 when the Ahom entered Assam through the Naga Hills from Burma (Vashum 2005). The Nagas resisted the advance of the Ahom, so there were fierce battles in many places. However, the contact was limited to a section of a few Naga tribes, so the majority of the Nagas remained in their respective age-old village states. According to J. P. Mills, 'for as far back as they can remember the Aos have been friendly with the rulers of Assam, and the plains have never been used as a happy hunting-ground for head-seekers' (Mills cited in Kumar 2005: 113).

It can be expected that there was some contact with other tribes in Assam and Manipur for trading purposes, but it was the British who made major contact. The

Angami were perhaps the first among the Nagas who had major contact with the British. The British went into the Naga Hills in the early 1830s because they wanted to open up the way through Manipur and Assam. Initially, the British did not intend to occupy the Naga Hills, however since the raids by the Nagas against the British occasionally, they began to conquer the area. In 1866 the British established the Naga Hills District, and then implemented the Inner Line Regulation in 1873. This line, as Vashum (2005) insists, did not in any way decide the sovereignty of the territory beyond. The plantation owners were not allowed to acquire the land beyond the line.

The Naga consciousness had not emerged before the British advanced into the region. This is because the Nagas had been relatively isolated from other ethnic groups and their chance to meet 'Other' was limited. As Hall (1996) argues, identities are constructed through, not outside, but difference and it is through the relation to the 'Other' that the identity is constructed. For many Nagas, the British were the first 'other', in which they found a difference. The British also gave the Naga the opportunity to meet others. The British government recruited about 2,000 Nagas during the First World War and sent them to France as Labour Corps. As Yonuo argues:

The journey across seas and countries awakened the spunk of the Naga nationalism like other parts of India and they began to develop the concept of a Naga nation which had not been dreamt of before (Yonuo 1984 cited in Vashum 2005).

In 1918, an association called the Naga Club was formed with the joint effort of government officials, the villages' headmen and the Nagas who returned from France. In 1929, the Naga Club submitted a historical Memorandum to the Simon Commission in Kohima. The Naga demanded that they be excluded from the proposed Reformed Schemes of India (Vashum 2005). In 1941, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills and Governor of Assam at the time suggested a scheme to carve out a trust territory called Crown Colony which includes the Naga Hills, the Northeast Frontier areas in upper Assam and the hill areas in upper Burma.

During the Second World War, the Naga Hills became a fierce battle zone between Britain and Japan. The Japanese army proceeded from Burma to attempt to occupy Imphal, which was the main supply base of the Allies to China. The Japanese lost the battle against the British who retreated from the Naga Hills. The Imphal mission was very badly organised and many Japanese people died because of malnutrition and tropical diseases.

After WWII, in order to unite the Nagas and to repair the damage caused by the war, Naga National Council (NNC) was formed in February 1946. Initially, NNC did not speak about the separation from British India, but later on it demanded the autonomy of the Naga Hills under Assam, which should be separated from Bengal (Vasum 2005). In 1947, the NNC sent a Memorandum to the Viceroy of India about setting up an Interim Government for the Naga for a period of ten years, at the end of which the Naga people would be left to choose any form of government they liked. The NNC declared Naga National Independence on August 14, 1947, which was one day before the independence of India. British India did not recognise the declaration of Naga National Independence. In this Naga independent movement, A.Z. Phizo was the leader who shaped the Naga nation.

In December 1949, Phizo advocated for a sovereign Naga State outside the Indian Union with a separate flag, currency, and so on, but the Government of India did not agree to this. The NNC then decided to establish a separate sovereign state of Nagaland in April 1950 and Phizo was elected as the president of the NNC in December 1950. The Naga independent movement sprang up but the Indian Government did not accept it. In 1955, Indian Military forces were called in place of the Assam police battalions. The military forces went on to burn almost all of the villages in the Naga Hills and many Naga people were killed (Vashum 2005). Phizo managed to escape and arrived in London to lobby for the cause of the Naga's independence.

Due to lack of space, I will not detail the detailed negotiation between the Naga and the Indian Government, but the fact is that there are many Naga people who are trying to find ways to gain independence, however the Indian government is not ready to listen to the Naga's plea and talks are still ongoing.

The *Morung*: Youth Dormitory System of the Naga

This section will discuss the youth dormitory system of the Naga called *Morung* to explain the traditional system of becoming an adult. Anthropologists have observed this rite of passage in various societies in different parts of the world. Turner's study on Ndembu for example is a well-known work on ritual in a tribal society (Turner 1967). In many traditional societies, after passing the rite of passage, a boy/girl is considered as an adult. The *Morung* is not as widely known as Ndembu's rituals, however among the researchers who have studied Naga society in the past it is a well-known social system. von Fürer-Haimendorf (1950) noted that young men that were part of the Naga tribe had

houses called *Morung*. These played a vital role in co-ordinating the activities of all of the male members of the community and gained particular importance in those warlike societies that depend on young men for the defence of the village.

In Naga society, the *Morung* is a common and important socio-cultural and political institution. It is translated as youth dormitory or educational institution (Vashum 2005). When young boys reached puberty they were admitted to the *Morung* and trained in the art of warfare, the code of conduct, traditional values, and so on. Girls also had a similar institution and they were trained in the moral code, handicrafts, and so on. According to Kumar (2005), the word *Morung* is not a tribal word but it is from the Ahom language. The word *Morung* is commonly used in Northeast India. The *Morung* has different names in different tribes. Shukla and Zetsuvi (2006) mention that the Angami calls it *Thehou*, the Ao calls it *Ariju*, the Sema calls it *Apuki*, and so on. The buildings of *Morung* are built independently from other residential buildings, but according to Shukla and Zetsuvi (2006), in some tribes such as the Angami, *Morungs* are attached to a person's house.

As mentioned above, there are several functions of the *Morung*. Of these, the defence role is one of the most important functions. According to Kumar (2005), log drums are set in the *Morung* among the central and Eastern Nagas in order to announce the arrival of the enemy or of any eminent danger. For example, among the Chang Naga, a log drum was placed in the middle of the *Morung*. The drum was made from the hollowed trunk of a tree with a carved buffalo head on one end and the tail on the other (Kumar 2005). The role of defence was also pointed out by Singh. He argues that the basic objectives of the *Morung* were to defend a village for which a training system for the youth was developed (Singh 2008). Varah (2013) also mentions the military training role of the *Morung*, arguing that all sorts of war tactics like the use of a dao, spear, bow and arrow and how to hold a shield were explained to its members. It was an important institution for war related matters and religious rites. Kumar (2005) argues that the heads of the victims, the human effigies and the skulls of the sacrificial victims were hung in the *Morung*. von Fürer-Haimendorf (1950) also pointed out that it is the focal point of the village's ritual and they usually harbour the valuable head-trophies. The boys of the *Morung* received religio-magical sanctions through *Morung*-rites and the association with the *Morung* of the powerful magical forces was inherent in the heads of the slain enemies (ibid.).

Another important function of the *Morung* was for it to serve as an educational institution. As Singh (2008) argues, it served as the learning place of the youths. This

point is finely elaborated by Shukla and Zetsuvi. They argue that at the *Morung* proper habits and manners were taught, proper moulding of the character of the young took place in addition to the all-round education of the younger ones in social, religious, educational and cultural activities (Shukla and Zetsuvi 2006).

The boys in the *Morung* also learnt about traditions, legends and the heroic deeds of their forefathers, as Shukla and Zetsuvi (2006) mention. Traditions include making baskets of various patterns, indigenous musical instruments, wooden utensils and so on (ibid.). Singh (2008) also points out the passing of tradition in the *Morung*, which served as a means to communicate the experience and knowledge of the people from generation to generation and to prepare the youth to shoulder the responsibility in their life.

The *Morung* prohibited women from entering. It was a boys' club, as von Fürer-Haimendorf (1950) suggested. Shukla and Zetsuvi (2006) argue that it was a taboo for the women to enter the male dormitory due to the existence of the belief that by so doing ill-luck may fall on the males. Misfortune may come in the form of failure in hunting or in suffering casualties in the event of a fight. Girls, instead, had a similar dormitory institution. The girls slept together according to their respective age groups in a large room which was generally attached to a house of powerful person in the village (ibid.). From the age of nine or ten, according to von Fürer-Haimendorf (1950), girls must sleep apart from their parents. They learnt how to spin thread from cotton and how to weave cloth from the elders. The main function of the girls' dormitory, according to Shukla and Zetsuvi (2006), was to build up the girls' character, to facilitate the selection of a partner and to shape them to shoulder motherly responsibilities and become an effective citizen. The girls' dormitory lacked the ritual importance and magical virtue of the *Morung*, von Fürer-Haimendorf (1950) argued.

Today, as Singh (2008) argues, the need and significance of the *Morung* have declined due to the changing social pattern of the Nagas and also due to their adoption of Christianity. The infiltration of Christianity has had a significant impact on the decline of the *Morung* institution. Head hunting was banned and hostilities amongst tribes came to a stop under Christianity (Rao 1976 cited in Shukla and Zetsuvi 2006 p. 27).^{iv}

In this section, we have examined the *Morung* institution of the Nagas. As many researchers point out, it served as a military institution as well as an educational institution, which included the transferring of their traditions. In any case, the important point is that the young newcomers of the institution learnt from the senior members of

the society. The girls' dormitories also functioned in the same manner. Varah (2013) reports the age group system of the *Morung* and the allocation of authorities on the basis of seniority. For example, the junior group is under strict discipline training. The members of the group learn manual and basic chores such as carrying water, chopping firewood, sharpening daos and other implements of war and agriculture, running errands for the seniors, and so on. Generally speaking, the members of this age group are under 15 years old, and after three to five years of training, they are upgraded to the intermediate group, where they become involved in more important village responsibilities including night duty (ibid.). They also assist the seniors in the administration of the *Morung*. The senior group consists of the master artisans and trainers who are entrusted to train the younger age groups, and who are in charge of all activities and matters related to the *Morung* (ibid.). The age group system was also observed by von Fürer-Haimendorf (1950). Again, the important point is that the younger members of the dormitory learnt the necessary skills to operate their society and had the responsibility to play central roles in village activities. It was a well-organised system for the junior members of the society to get in touch with the senior members so they could learn from the role models of the society. The youth dormitory system taught the youngsters how to become adults.

Naga Young People Today: A Brief Ethnography

Today, the *Morung* system does not play a central role in Naga societies. Young people receive modern education and learn subjects which are similar to those in other countries, for example mathematics, languages, history, science and so on. Going on to higher education is not uncommon among Naga people. In the opening section of this article, I included the ethnography of young Naga people living in Delhi. This section also shows part of the student life of the young Nagas in Delhi to explain their future aspirations.

In the above-mentioned part, Ayan told me about her uncertain feelings towards her future. I was interested in what she said and asked her why she would like to study political science or sociology for her post-graduate studies. She said the following:

I don't know. Well...I can't imagine that I will be a lawyer, so going to law school is not an option. History...well, I've heard we have to learn the entire Indian history, but I don't have this knowledge at all. To study history, Hindi is

a must. On top of that, we have to study Sanskrit and be able to read the ancient texts. Impossible! I can't even understand Hindi, you know. My maths is pathetic. I can't study science and engineering. So, political science is ok, eh?

When she told me about her intention to study further she said she had chosen the subjects not because she wanted to study them, but because she would be able to pass the course and get a degree. Ayan also mentioned her reason for thinking about going to post-graduate school without having a fixed plan.

Actually, I don't want to go back home now. I miss my parents, and back home life is relaxing. There are no irritating Indians either. But, you know, it's a bit slow and I'd feel bored if I stayed there longer. Delhi is not a nice city for sure, but it is stimulating. There are a lot of bars and restaurants here and I can enjoy shopping in Delhi. My friends are also here. If I did not do anything after graduation, my parents would ask me to go back home. If I told them that I would keep studying, they would not say anything, so I could continue to stay in Delhi.

For Ayan, Delhi is an attractive city. Her priority at the moment is to stay in this mega city and have fun with her friends. Studying at a post-graduate school is not her purpose but it is a means to stay in this fun city, Delhi.

After speaking to her briefly at the bar, Ayan left with her drink. She proceeded to the room where music was playing and mixed with the people dancing there.

I felt like smoking so I went to another room, expecting a quieter ambience. While smoking a cigarette, I started chatting to some boys that were near me. They were studying at a coaching school to prepare for a civil servant exam. I expressed my admiration for their hard working spirit, because I knew that the civil servant exams were very competitive. One of the boys named Peter had a sip of his Kingfisher beer and said:

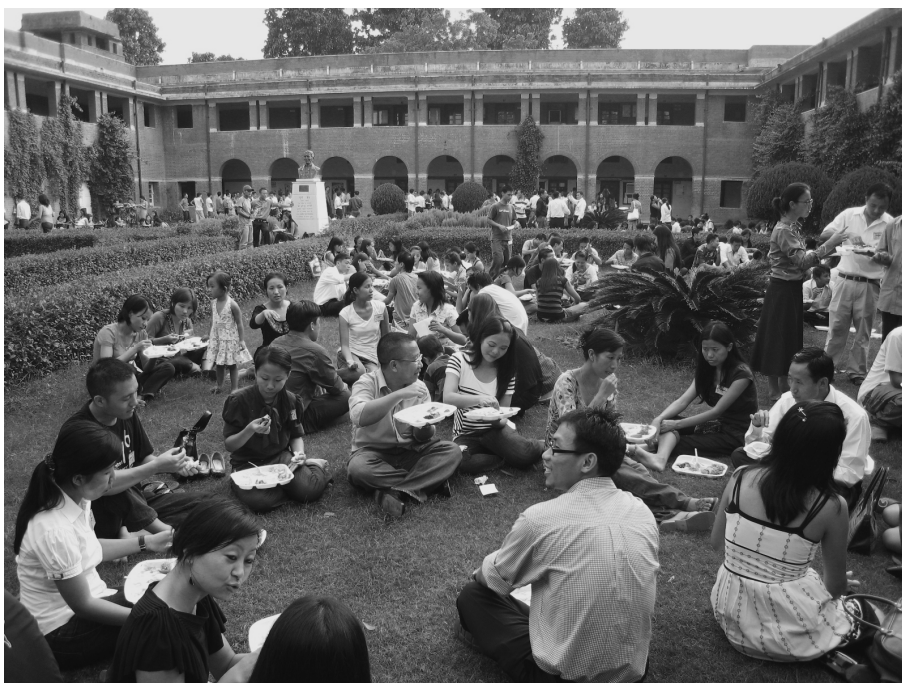
'Yes, there are a lot of things to learn, so we have to study hard.

'Do you?' said Bruce with a smile who had been listening quietly to our conversation. 'I thought you spent more time partying than studying. When was the last time you attended class?'

'Oh, shut up. It's holiday season now, and you can't study all the time, right? I'm just relaxing a bit', Peter said to Bruce. He took his Gold Flake and lit it. 'This guy', he said pointing at Bruce, 'failed an exam three times', he said to me. 'He is busier playing

football than studying.’

‘Yeah, this will be my fourth attempt’, admitted Bruce. ‘Well, football is fun and exercise is good for brain, you know.’



Picture 2: Naga students in Delhi.

Both Peter and Bruce are attending a coaching school to prepare for the civil servant examination. The exam is very competitive so they have to study extremely hard to pass it. However, from our conversation, I’m guessing their attitude towards study is quite relaxed, and they seem to be enjoying their lives in Delhi. In fact, during my stay in Delhi, I met a considerable number of young Nagas who were studying for the civil servant exams, and found quite a few of them were not studying seriously, but rather they were busy socialising with their friends in Delhi. Peter and Bruce’s case is not a distinctive example, but similar cases can be found easily among the young Nagas in Delhi.

I have depicted one of my interactions with Naga people when I was in Delhi. During my stay there, I mingled with a number of Naga people and conversed with them. The comments made by the Nagas above are some of the common remarks that I found interesting. These also help us to understand the changing idea of becoming an

adult in Naga society.

Concluding Remark

This article has investigated young Naga people's way of life in Delhi in the early 21st century. In the pre-modern period, their life course was rather simple. When a boy reached puberty, he was accommodated in a youth dormitory, the *Morung*, and he was taught the art of war, the Naga tradition and the sense of responsibility to become an adult member of society. He was expected to become an adult and this passage was demonstrated by the senior members of the society. The boy himself was also conscious about taking the correct steps to become an adult and learning the responsibilities of an adult man. This was also similar for girls.

In the process of modernisation, the youth dormitory system is no longer as influential as it used to be, and children now experience the modern education system. In school, they learn knowledge which has been developed by the West, however they do not learn how to become an adult. The idea of individualism and valuing diversity also came into Naga society with modern education, thus giving them more choices for their life course. In addition, the recent development of consumerism in India is influencing the young Nagas. Those who came to study in big cities like Delhi and Mumbai are being exposed to global consumerism. They enjoy the same way of life as the young people in New York, London and Tokyo, although the varieties of goods, services and entertainment are limited compared to those cities. Naga young people in Delhi can enjoy shopping, dining out in a fancy restaurant, drinking in a fashionable bar and going to a nightclub. They are not under their parents' supervision. They enjoy their freedom and becoming an adult has been postponed. Today, the idea of becoming an adult itself is difficult to define, which makes things more complicated.

A significant number of young Nagas are hoping that their party lifestyle will continue a little longer.

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ⁱ One US dollar was approximately 62 rupees on December 27 2013.

ⁱⁱ The names in this article are false for privacy reasons.

ⁱⁱⁱ The data was extracted from:

http://censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/SCST/dh_st_nagaland.pdf, accessed in November 2010. According to this census, in Nagaland, 89.1 per cent of the total population are Scheduled Tribes. The Nagas comprise 98.2 per cent of the ST group in Nagaland.

^{iv} Rao, V. V., *A Century of Tribal Politics in North East India 1874 – 1974*, S. Chand & Company, New Delhi, 1976.